

READY FOR 21ST CENTURY SUCCESS

THE NEW PROMISE OF
PUBLIC EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM GOVERNOR DEVAL PATRICK	1
THE NEW PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION: READY FOR 21ST CENTURY SUCCESS	2
Our Starting Point	4
<i>A foundation of strength</i>	
Our Challenges	6
<i>International competition, an outdated curriculum</i>	
<i>A stubborn achievement gap, inadequate external supports</i>	
<i>An education workforce crisis</i>	
<i>A century-old system</i>	
THE PATRICK ADMINISTRATION ACTION AGENDA	12
Goal 1: Students	14
<i>Vision for 2020 and actions</i>	
Spotlight: Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet	
Goal 2: Teachers and Education Leaders	17
<i>Vision for 2020 and actions</i>	
Spotlight: Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and School Leaders	
Goal 3: College, Career and Life Success	20
<i>Vision for 2020 and actions</i>	
Spotlight: Full Access to Community College and Postsecondary Education	
Goal 4: Innovation and Systemic Reform to Create a 21st Century Public Education System	23
<i>Vision for 2020 and actions</i>	
Spotlight: Readiness Schools	
ENDNOTES	27
APPENDIX	
The Readiness Project Report	29
<i>About the Project</i>	
<i>Co-Chair Letter to the Governor</i>	
<i>Goals and Recommendations</i>	
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM GOVERNOR DEVAL PATRICK	34



DEAR FELLOW CITIZENS:

I am delighted to present the results of the Commonwealth Readiness Project, an unprecedented discussion on the future of public education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For nine months, a dedicated and distinguished group of educators, experts and stakeholders has given its time and counsel to help define and initiate the next chapter in education reform in our great state. The following report, *Ready for 21st Century Success*, is founded on their insightful and informative work.

Education is transformative. My life, like the lives of so many others, was changed deeply, dramatically and positively through the power of a high-quality education. As we contemplate the future of our Commonwealth, and the future of our country and world, we must think differently and act more creatively about how we create consistent excellence throughout public education.

We must break down the silos that characterize our approach to public education. Instead, we must create a continuum of teaching and learning dedicated at every turn to the academic and personal success of each individual student. As we do so, we must hold fast to what works and change what does not.

The following report outlines the challenges, opportunities, needs and imperatives in public education today. Most notably, it provides an action agenda for establishing universal excellence over the next decade. Recognizing that no one idea will transform the system, the agenda leverages the relationships within the education sector and among all sectors of society. As we implement these action items, my administration will continue its commitment to the collaboration and cooperation that are the hallmarks of the Commonwealth Readiness Project. Taken together, and with all stakeholders working together, I am confident that we can deliver on a new 21st century promise of high-quality public education for all Massachusetts residents.

Throughout the history of this remarkable nation, Massachusetts has been the leader in public school innovation. I believe that the path we begin to travel today will keep us at the vanguard of serving our children, families and communities — as well as our future — extraordinarily well. Doing so will assure that we will meet and exceed the revolutionary demands of this bright new century.

Sincerely,

Deval Patrick

THE NEW PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION: READY FOR 21ST CENTURY SUCCESS

"I ask you to see what I see about what's possible here in the Commonwealth and indeed essential to be ready for our future. And I ask each of you to join with me in working to make that vision real. A decade of hard work, focus, discipline and accountability. A decade of 'no excuses' leadership, starting with me. A decade to get ready — so that we can master and shape our own future."

Governor Deval Patrick
Commencement Address, UMass Boston, June 2007

Massachusetts is at a crossroads. Fifteen years after the passage of landmark education reform legislation, the Commonwealth is a national education leader. Standards-based reforms have yielded significant results. Massachusetts students perform better than their national peers, securing top scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and on the SAT. Overall, student scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) continue to rise, with 84 percent of the class of 2008 passing on the first try.¹

At the same time, this success masks persistent, complex problems that demand immediate attention. Despite quantum leaps in academic rigor, our existing education system is not adequately preparing every student for success in life and work. As a source of workers, it doesn't meet the needs of employers. As a public investment, it doesn't deliver the return it should for taxpayers. Most importantly, as an entry point to the American dream, it remains too selective. All too often, a student's chances for success are determined not by her intellect or ability to learn, but by her ZIP code and circumstances beyond her control.

These failures speak to the unfinished business of 1990s education reform — lessons learned from implementing bold, large-scale change — and to the evolving nature of what it means to be an educated citizen in a fast-paced, technologically driven world economy.

Ours is not a 21st century education system. Its structure and underlying assumptions are holdovers from another century, when the goal of public education was to prepare only a fraction of students for higher education. High school graduation rates were low, and that was okay because low-skilled manufacturing jobs could support a family. Times have changed and so must the fundamental promise of public education. Today, our schools must ensure that high school graduates know and are capable of much more than ever before.

LOSING STUDENTS ALONG THE EDUCATION PIPELINE

For every 10 high school freshmen ...



8 graduate from high school



6 enroll in college



3-4 earn a degree



Source: Nellhaus, Jeffrey and Patricia Plummer. "Facing the Challenge of Increasing College and Career Readiness." Massachusetts College and Career Readiness Summit, 2008.



Meeting this challenge requires the creation of a fully integrated, coherent and seamless education system. Learning must begin before and extend beyond the traditional kindergarten through 12th grade timeframe. A high school diploma is no longer enough. The new baseline of educational attainment is an associate degree or the equivalent. And our approach to education, fully committed to the same high standards for all, will proceed only by serving the *individual* needs of each student.

This report outlines an education reform strategy that will help transform our public schools over the next decade. It assesses the state’s advantages and makes the case for reform based on four specific challenges: growing international competition and an outdated curriculum; a stubborn achievement gap; an education workforce crisis; and a century-old system. The action agenda that follows offers specific steps for creating a world-class education system that will promote high levels of student achievement, outstanding teaching and educational leadership, full access to postsecondary opportunities and workforce preparedness, and systemic innovation that will move our public education system into the 21st century.

THE NEW PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

We will prepare all students to be lifelong learners and successful, contributing citizens in a world economy and global society by creating a 21st century education system that is fully integrated, coherent and seamless — serving children from birth through higher education and beyond.

continue business as usual, complacent with where we are compared to other states. Or we can forge ahead, leading to a new, dynamic era of reform that responds to pressing global realities. As we move headlong into another decade of unprecedented innovation and change, our challenge — our obligation — is to ensure that all Massachusetts students have the skills, knowledge and dispositions they need to take full advantage of all the opportunities that this new, post-industrial information age presents.

WIDESPREAD BENEFITS OF QUALITY EDUCATION

\$1.1 million

Additional lifetime earnings for each bachelor’s degree recipient compared to high school dropouts

\$180,000

Lifetime benefits to government of each high school graduate

\$275,000

Lifetime costs to government of each high school dropout

Source: Khatiwada, Ishwar, Joseph McLaughlin, Andrew Sum. “The Fiscal Economic Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Estimates of the Tax Payments and Transfers Received by Massachusetts Adults in Selected Educational Subgroups.” March 2007. Center for Labor Market Studies. Northeastern University.

Importantly, these ideas reflect the economic and social realities of our time — not of times past. Taken together, they constitute a new promise for public education in Massachusetts, one that deals honestly with our advantages, addresses our deficits and keeps faith with our belief that an excellent education remains society’s great equalizer.

Our future, and that of our children, depends on what we do and set in motion today. The choices — and responsibilities — belong to us. We can

OUR STARTING POINT

A foundation of strength

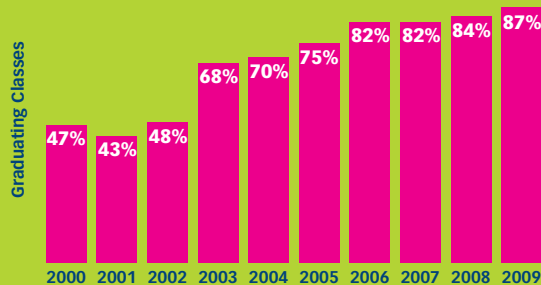
In many respects, Massachusetts is fortunate. Unlike many states, we can build our future on a firm foundation of success. Fifteen years after landmark education reform legislation, we can claim unmatched accomplishments in demonstrating that high expectations and high standards can work for students. Our students top the nation on several indicators of education achievement, we have the lowest dropout rates in the country, and the MCAS is heralded as the “gold standard” of state exams for its rigor, coherence and connections to the classroom curriculum.²

A STRONG FOUNDATION

- Massachusetts’ 4th and 8th graders have been first or tied for first on all four examinations of NAEP since 2005.
- Massachusetts students have one of the best records of performance on the SAT.
- Massachusetts is the best-performing state in the nation in the percentage of adults ages 25 to 64 with a college degree.

MCAS PASSING RATES ARE UP

Percentage of students passing MCAS on their first try



Sources: “The Nation’s Report Card: State Snapshot Reports for Massachusetts.” 2007. Institute of Education Sciences; “2007 College-Bound Seniors Total Group Profile Report.” 2007. The College Board; “ADDING IT UP: State Challenges for Increasing College Access and Success.” 2007. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Commonwealth also is a leader in the drive toward high-quality early education and care and universal prekindergarten.³ We boast a first-in-the-nation Department of Early Education and Care that connects multiple child and youth service planning, funding and implementation functions. And we continue to make steady progress toward high-quality pre-K experiences for all children.

Complementing our strength in early education and K–12 performance, Massachusetts has a rich network of vocational technical and agricultural schools. Our 38 technical schools prepare students for smooth entry into professional trades while providing an esteemed high school education. Our vocational education schools have lower dropout rates than the state average.⁴ We have a robust community college system that is integral to our state capacity to meet the evolving needs of business and industry.

Finally, Massachusetts is a destination state for those in pursuit of a first-rate postsecondary education. And our commitment to lifelong learning is demonstrated by our strong and continuously improving state workforce development system. The graduates of our broad array of public and private higher education institutions fuel the state’s knowledge economy. They stimulate and energize the research, ideas and inventions that create



new products, companies and future industries. Students, whether born and raised in Massachusetts or who come from other states and nations, who choose to make Massachusetts their permanent home contribute to our economic development and culture of citizen engagement.

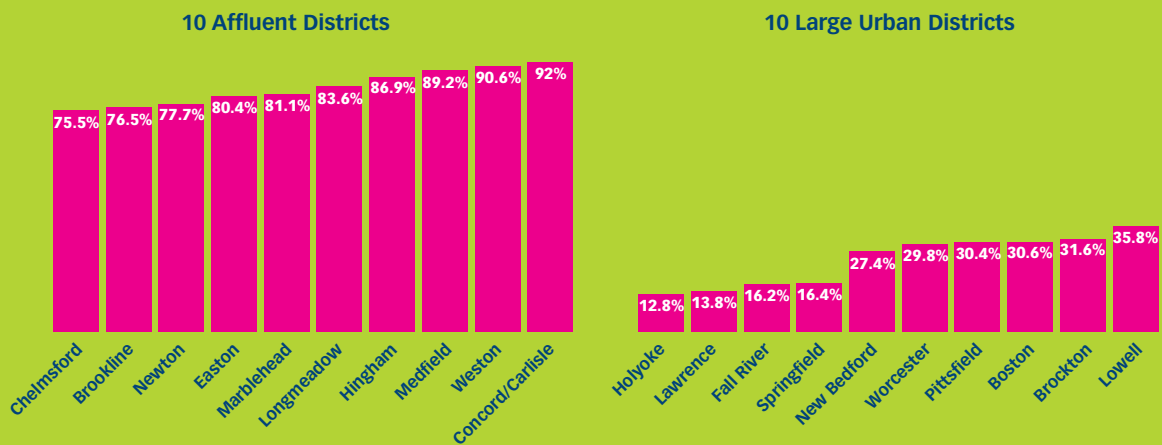
As we steer our system of schooling forward, we must ensure that the effective approaches and practices at every successful school make their way into *all* our public schools. All the while, we must continuously strengthen our adult education and workforce development systems. For example, we should ensure that we are leveraging well our vocational technical infrastructure to extend the reach of postsecondary education opportunities, particularly community college courses and programs and degrees, to students in every community. They must be connected to the elementary, secondary and postsecondary segments of our system as well as to the existing and emerging needs and interests of our state's businesses and industries.

We have achieved significant accomplishments for which we should be proud. More importantly, we must view our accomplishments as significant advantages on which we can build.

And build we must.

ENSURING THAT MORE STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE

Percentage of students who graduated on time and planned to attend a four-year college or university in 2007



Source: Sum, Andrew, Ishwar Khatiwada, Joseph McLaughlin. "On-Time High School Graduation Rates and College Enrollment Rates for Massachusetts High School Graduates Class of 2006 and 2007: The Existence of Large Disparities Between Affluent Suburban and Central City School Districts Across the Commonwealth." May 2008. Center for Labor Market Studies. Northeastern University.

OUR CHALLENGES

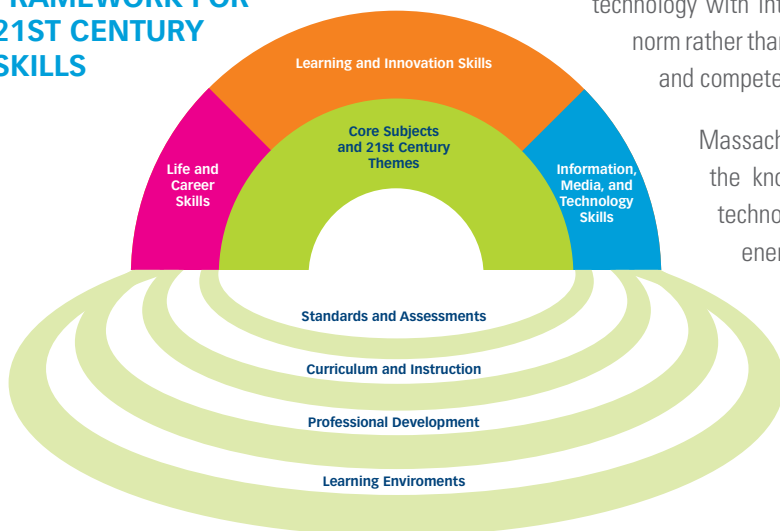
International competition, an outdated curriculum

Although Massachusetts continues to outpace the other 49 states academically, we cannot afford complacency. That is because much of the rest of the world has caught up and, in too many cases, surpasses U.S. achievement. Between 2000 and 2006, American students dropped from 18th to 25th place among industrialized countries in math and from 14th to 21st in science.⁵ Meanwhile, U.S. 8th graders were outperformed by students in nine countries: five from Asia (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Korea and Singapore) and four from Europe (Belgium, Estonia, Hungary and the Netherlands) on the 2003 TIMSS exam.⁶ We used to lead the world in the percentage of students earning college degrees; we now rank 10th among industrialized nations in the percentage of 25–34-year-olds with an associate degree or higher, and we stand as one of the only nations where older adults are more educated than younger adults.⁷ Many Massachusetts young people — despite having earned their high school diplomas — have to take remedial math and English classes to handle college-level work. In 2005, our public higher education system found that 37 percent of incoming freshmen from Massachusetts public high schools needed remedial assistance.⁸

This problem is exacerbated by an outdated curriculum and too heavy a reliance on 20th century tools and teaching strategies. We must strengthen and modernize the curriculum in science, math and engineering, while increasing our focus on world languages, geography, civics and the arts. We must emphasize 21st century themes such as global awareness, financial, business and entrepreneurial literacy, and health and civics literacy. Heightened attention to these topics, using modern information technology with interdisciplinary, collaborative hands-on learning as the norm rather than the exception, will enable students to master the skills and competencies that work, life and active citizenship require.

Massachusetts employers are struggling to find workers with the knowledge needed for high-growth jobs, including the technology-dependent fields of life sciences, renewable energy and health care.⁹ The number of students from Massachusetts colleges and universities studying science, technology, engineering and

FRAMEWORK FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS





mathematics declined from 1993 to 2007, while the number rose nationally.¹⁰ Employers also report a shortage of potential employees who possess fundamental skills and competencies needed in every field, including communication, collaboration, self-direction and motivation.¹¹

These facts alone are enough to warrant a call to action, but there is more: The skills challenge is not confined to young people advancing along the traditional education path. There is a growing population of Massachusetts adults who are seeking employment who also lack content knowledge and 21st century skills. Of the Commonwealth's current 92,021 job vacancies, 46 percent require an associate degree or better.¹² National forecasts suggest that some two-thirds of all new jobs will require some education after high school.¹³

The implications of integrating 21st century skills into what and how students learn extend to every aspect of our education system — from standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, to professional development and learning environments.

A stubborn achievement gap, inadequate external supports

Educational attainment correlates closely with economic status, here and across the country. Let's be clear: Our public education system cannot get all students to a high standard if we pretend that they all have the same learning needs and that these needs can be met in the same way.

Poverty is pernicious. Its effects are seen in the stubborn achievement gap that exists between African American and Latino students and white and Asian students. In 2007, for instance, 73 percent of African American students and 67 percent of Latino students passed both math and English exams on their first try, compared to 91 percent of white students and 90 percent of Asian students.¹⁴

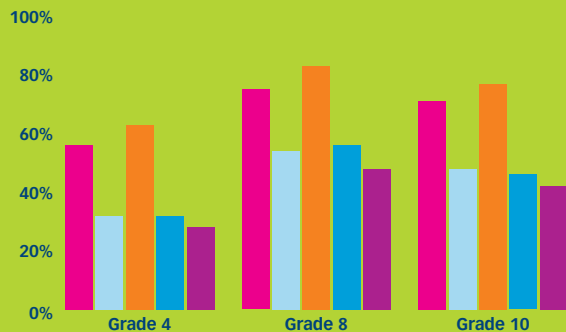
FALLING BEHIND INTERNATIONALLY

25th U.S. rank in math	21st U.S. rank in science	10th U.S. rank in college degrees earned
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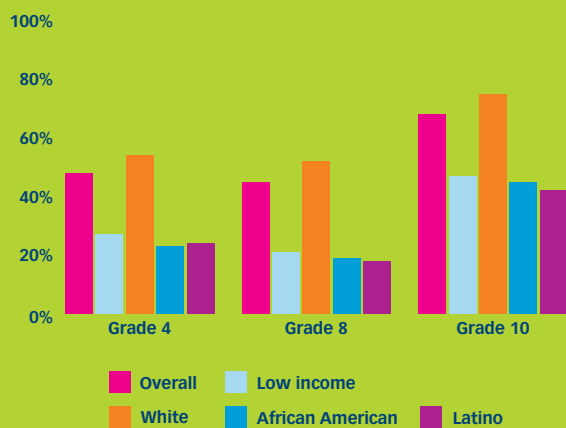
Sources: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). 2000 and 2006 Results. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); "ADDING IT UP: State Challenges for Increasing College Access and Success." 2007. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT GAPS REMAIN

Percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on MCAS English Language Arts, 2006–07



Percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on MCAS Mathematics, 2006–07



Source: "MCAS Tests Summary of State Results," 2007. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. 4 June 2008. www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/results/summary.pdf.

The disparity in dropout rates is another sign that equality continues to elude us. In the 2007 four-year cohort, nearly 16 percent of African American students and nearly 23 percent of Hispanic students dropped out of high school, compared to only 6.6 percent of white students.¹⁵ Nearly half of our nation's African American students, nearly 40 percent of Latino students, but only 11 percent of white students attend high schools in which graduation is not the norm.¹⁶

We know now that much of what impacts a student's ability to learn happens outside of school — in the years before kindergarten or in the hours after school, on weekends and during the summer.

Educators, administrators, schools and institutions of higher learning work hard to take advantage of the opportunities presented when students are physically present in schools — from offering free lunch and health screenings to counseling services and more. However, the reality is that the capacity of the public education system to address these external influences is limited by time, resources and convention.

These opportunity gaps will be addressed only when we offer these children educational resources and interventions on par with those available to middle-class families, including more preschool education as well as expanded summer and after-school learning opportunities.

Our system of standards and accountability does a great job of exposing our challenges. Now, we must find new strategies to address them.



IMAGINATION MATTERS

“The school, the state, the country that empowers, nurtures, enables imagination among its students and citizens, that’s who’s going to be the winner.”

Author and columnist Thomas L. Friedman, Journal of the American Association of School Administrators, February 2008

An education workforce crisis

Without question, any improvement in education depends on knowledgeable and effective teachers in every classroom, strong and visionary school leaders guiding safe and efficient schools, and world-class faculty at our colleges and universities. Yet in 2008, Massachusetts was given a “C” for K–12 teacher quality,¹⁷ our early education and care workforce development system is in its infancy, and far too many of our public colleges and universities are increasingly staffed by part-time, adjunct faculty.

We need to act quickly.

Research often shows that teacher quality affects student achievement.¹⁸ Students taught by well-trained, experienced teachers achieve at demonstrably higher levels than students who have inexperienced, untrained teachers.¹⁹ Moreover, the effects of a very good (or very poor) teacher last long beyond a single year, influencing a student for life.²⁰

In key disciplines — including science and math and at some grade levels, particularly middle and high school — teachers in Massachusetts are increasingly in short supply, and the projections for the future supply hold little promise of improvement. Data suggest that after just five years, between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers nationwide have left teaching altogether.²¹ In Boston alone, 194 teachers in their first three years of employment left the system in the 2004–05 school year — an attrition rate of 47 percent.²² And over the next five years, roughly 20 percent of longtime teachers are expected to retire from Massachusetts public schools.²³

By seeking a system that educates all students to the high levels of achievement and attainment required for successful futures, we are placing

STATE TEACHER POLICIES

The 2008 Quality Counts report identified the following areas, among others, where Massachusetts has room for improvement.

	YES	NO
State requires substantial formal coursework in subject area(s) taught		✓
Prospective teachers must pass written test in subject-specific pedagogy		✓
State has ban or cap on number of out-of-field teachers		✓
Teacher education programs accountable for graduates’ performance in classroom settings		✓
State provides incentives to teachers who work in targeted teaching-assignment areas		✓
State provides incentives for National Board Certified teachers to work in targeted schools		✓
State finances professional development for all districts		✓

Source: Excerpts from Quality Counts 2008, Education Week, 10 January 2008.

our educational aspirations squarely on the shoulders of teachers in the classroom and the leadership teams in our schools. We need to provide them with the time, expertise and support to reach the Commonwealth's ambitious goals. In this new phase of education reform, therefore, we must work with teachers and education leaders to reshape and align our systems of educator recruitment, preparation, certification, licensure, support and professional development. Our approach must be inclusive, comprehensive and innovative.

CHANGING NEEDS

70%

School-aged children enrolled in a formal early education and care program

31%

Students who are "latchkey children"

22%

Prekindergarteners with access to a program accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

15.1%

Students in public K–12 schools who claim English as a second language — this number is only expected to increase over the next decade

Sources: "Momentum Grows: Early Education in Massachusetts. Early Education for All. 6 March 2008; "A Report on the Cost of Universal, High-Quality Early Education in Massachusetts." Early Education for All. October 2006. 2008 State Profile. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. 2008; New Survey Data: Massachusetts Latchkey Kids from Working Families Vastly Outnumber Those in Afterschool Program." Afterschool Alliance. 24 March 2005.

reform was to think that setting high standards, creating the curriculum frameworks to achieve those standards and strengthening accountability for results would be enough. We focused far too little attention on the system itself. We see now that we would have achieved greater success over the last 15 years if we also had taken commensurate action to strengthen our schools' capacity to meet the dramatically increased demands we

We must recognize and promote teaching and education leadership as critical and valuable professions capable of drawing the most qualified candidates into the field. Then, we need to provide steady support so that each teacher and administrator can advance his own content knowledge and continuously refine his craft.

A century-old system

Imagine driving the same car your parents and grandparents drove last century.

Imagine using the same appliances.

Imagine the same medical treatments.

Frightening, right? And yet, our students are learning in an education system designed to meet the social and economic needs of the early 20th century.

One of the biggest errors in the conception and early implementation of 1990s education



set. We set the right goal — “all students at proficiency.” However, we left schools operating as they have for more than a century, when educational attainment was distributed based on the traditional bell curve — a few students at proficiency, many in the mediocre middle, and a handful or more (depending on the school system) failing.

This mass-production, “batch-processing”²⁴ approach to education no longer works in an economy in which the skills needed for college and a job that will support a family of four are virtually identical.²⁵ That means we need tailored instructional strategies that help all students meet the same high standards, recognizing that they will reach these goals in many different ways. The first phase of education reform failed to differentiate the quantity and quality of instruction required to give each student — as opposed to groups of students — the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

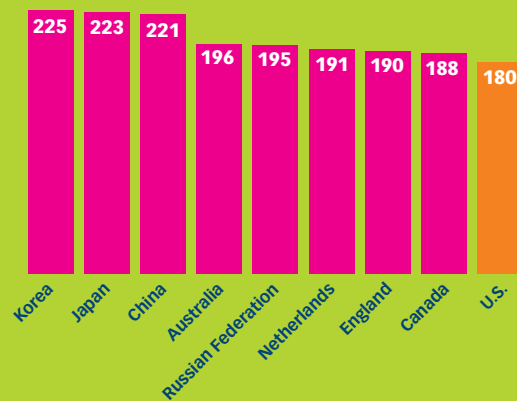
In addition, as we implemented the first wave of reform, we underestimated the time required to get all students to proficiency in core subjects, while at the same time providing a well-rounded education in the arts and other subjects. This has left schools trying to cram 21st century expectations into last century’s school structure and schedule. Longer school days and longer school years are just two options to consider as we rethink how to meet heightened expectations.

Importantly, school administrators and teachers need much more assistance if they are to educate 100 percent of students to proficiency. We are asking more of our schools than ever before: world-class achievements in core subjects, knowledge-economy skills, a well-rounded education, and the development of character and civic virtues. We have created a system of standards and accountability that does an excellent job of identifying and reporting on underperformance, yet we have not created the capacity to use those data to provide adequate assistance.

That must change. Starting now.

OUR STUDENTS SPEND LESS TIME IN SCHOOL

Average number of instructional days in the school year



Source: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
Institute of Education Sciences. 2003.

THE PATRICK ADMINISTRATION ACTION AGENDA

Massachusetts is ready for the next phase of education reform. We value our strengths. We understand our challenges. We know what we want to achieve. And now we present an agenda developed with broad-based input from education, government, business, civic leaders and citizens.

Four broad goals, all integrally linked, shape the specific steps in our action agenda:

First, we must raise the achievement of all students. That involves not only improvements in teaching and curriculum, but also addressing the external factors that impede success, teaching 21st century skills, and introducing learning opportunities and a heightened attention to quality care beginning in the earliest years of life.

Second, fulfilling the new promise of public education demands that we genuinely and deliberately elevate teaching to a recognized profession capable of attracting the most highly qualified candidates to the field. Teachers deserve the opportunity to build their own content knowledge and skills. They, along with administrators, need high-quality mentoring, professional development, supervision and evaluation.

Third, we must broaden and deepen our commitment to public education so that every student is prepared to take advantage of higher education, employment and lifelong learning opportunities. That means extending our definition of a basic public education to include at least two years of postsecondary learning. And it means aligning the curriculum with 21st century knowledge and skills.

Finally, we must unleash innovation broadly, allowing the power of new ideas and new approaches to transform the system. We have to muster the collective courage to ask provocative questions and answer them honestly. Do our students and teachers have enough time during the day and during the year to meet the necessarily high expectations that we have set? Does our system of district governance allow us to maximize resources and generate the best possible results? How can we improve our record of recruiting, hiring and retaining educators? Are we maximizing the use of our vocational and technical infrastructure and facilities? Are we leveraging technology well? What best practices from successful charter and other schools here in the Commonwealth and across the country and the world can we bring to *all* Massachusetts schools?

To move forward, we must confront old constraints and move innovations from the margin to the mainstream. Effectiveness must trump ideology. Mission must triumph over tradition. Children's learning needs must be paramount, notwithstanding any inconvenience to adults inside and outside of our schools.



As always, the network of people invested in our long tradition of excellence in education will drive this critical effort. Parents, policymakers, educators, business people and citizens must join forces and resources — human and financial — to keep pushing us forward. We are off to a strong start. Over the past 18 months, the Commonwealth has:

- Made strategic investments in early education and care, full-day kindergarten, expanded time for teaching and learning, and higher education facilities;
- Increased Chapter 70 funding to record levels, including targeted increases for special education students and English language learners;
- Created a new Executive Office of Education — a single point of access and coordination for statewide education policy;
- Initiated the first comprehensive survey of the state’s teachers;
- Invested historic levels of funding in youth and workforce development;
- Passed a \$1 billion life sciences bill; and
- Inaugurated the Commonwealth Corps and the Statewide Youth Council, two new initiatives that will give youth in our state a voice in their government and opportunities to actively engage in projects and service to address challenges in our communities.

The following action agenda, rooted in the good work of the past 15 years and the groundbreaking partnership that is the Commonwealth Readiness Project, outlines actions and strategies that will allow students, teachers, communities and Massachusetts to achieve more than ever before. While we offer detail on several signature initiatives in the following pages, let the release of this action agenda mark the beginning of an unprecedented decade of collaborative policymaking in education.

No single actor can generate the scale of reform required, and no single action included here will yield the scope of advancement needed. Working together, however, we can press ahead, implementing actions and strategies that will help get us all ready for success in the 21st century.

GOAL 1: STUDENTS

Meet the learning the needs of each student and provide the understanding, encouragement, support, knowledge and skills each requires to exceed the state's high expectations and rigorous academic standards

Administration Action Agenda

Short term (2008–11)

- Continue support for high-quality early education and care by establishing a schedule of incremental increases in annual funding to achieve universal prekindergarten, beginning with the fiscal year 2010 budget.
- Continue state support for high-quality, full-day kindergarten in every high-needs district by amending the Kindergarten Expansion Grant program in the fiscal year 2010 budget to allow state funds to be used for the transition from half-day to full-day programs, quality enhancements in all full-day programs in high-needs districts, and to cover the gap year between grant funding and funding provided through Chapter 70.
- Immediately create, by means of an executive order, a Task Force to establish a statewide birth-to-school-age strategy to ensure the healthy development of children, particularly those from low-income families. This strategy should include various service agencies, link multiple funding streams, and align preschool and school-age care.

BY 2020:

- Massachusetts will have a coordinated plan to provide high-quality education and care for all children beginning at birth, which will smooth their transitions to school.
- Students of every age will be able to access the individualized education they need when they need it.
- All students will receive sufficient high-quality instruction to ensure mastery of 21st century content, skills and competencies.

- Establish a Commonwealth Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet, an inter-governmental agency cabinet chaired by the secretaries of Education and Health and Human Services, and including a stakeholder advisory group, responsible for developing and implementing a shared vision to advance the health and well-being of all children and youth.
- Launch an Urban Schools Early Warning and Dropout Prevention Pilot in qualifying districts to identify students at risk of dropping out of high school and to implement tailored and appropriate interventions.



SPOTLIGHT: CHILD AND YOUTH READINESS CABINET

There is widespread awareness that children do not develop and learn in schools alone. Instead, they mature across many dimensions — physical, social, emotional, ethical and intellectual — within networks of families, schools, neighborhoods, communities and our larger society. Consequently, government agencies charged with fostering children’s development and working with families must incorporate these dimensions and networks into their service delivery systems and improve their coordination.

The Commonwealth Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet will be charged with breaking down silos by bringing together at one table state leaders who oversee the agencies working most closely with children and families. The Cabinet will be jointly chaired by the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. It will include the state secretaries of Housing and Economic Development, Labor and Workforce Development, and Public Safety. In addition, a stakeholder group, made of leaders from the legislative and judicial branches, as well as from the provider community and statewide youth community, will advise the Cabinet.

The Cabinet’s mission will be to set priority areas and identify and implement improvements that will address

the roots of systemic challenges. It will achieve this by first establishing common terms, a shared vision, and the baseline measures and benchmarks that will document progress over time. To drive service improvements, the Cabinet will be able to link and leverage funding.

A featured initiative of the Cabinet will be to offer recommendations for developing a statewide child and youth data reporting system. This initiative will include suggestions for developing a “Readiness Passport” for every child and youth enrolled in Massachusetts schools. This tool will summarize and document the delivery of educational and health and human services, which will help facilitate a smooth transition for those who move to different schools or communities. Consistent with any privacy constraints established by applicable federal and state laws, the Passport will be accessible to parents, guardians, teachers, providers and, as appropriate, students.

Additionally, the Cabinet will oversee the creation of the Urban Schools Early Warning and Dropout Prevention Pilot, which will identify students at risk of dropping out of high school and provide timely interventions in qualifying districts.

- Place one or more Student Support Coordinators in every low-income school to assist teachers; connect students and their families to appropriate, noneducational, state and community-based services, including those related to health, mental health, housing and social services; and to provide ongoing guidance and assistance with coordinating and integrating those services.
- Develop a comprehensive, statewide child and youth data and reporting system that will enable development of a “Readiness Passport” for every child and youth enrolled in Massachusetts schools. The Readiness Passport will provide parents, guardians and agencies with a simple tool to document key elements of a child’s educational experiences as well as to chronicle various services, interventions, supports, data and performance evaluations related to that child. Consistent with any privacy constraints established by applicable federal and state law, the Passport will be accessible to parents, guardians, teachers, providers and, as appropriate, students. The data and reporting system as well as the Readiness Passport will increase the efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration of the schools, state agencies and community youth organizations.

Mid term (2012–15)

- Increase the availability of and accessibility to state Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs.
- Reduce class size in K–2 classrooms in high-needs school districts.



GOAL 2: TEACHERS AND EDUCATION LEADERS

Ensure that every student in the Commonwealth is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported and effective educators

Administration Action Agenda

Short term (2008–11)

- Establish differentiated pay for qualifying teachers in high-needs districts and schools, in high-demand disciplines, and for those who possess highly needed, extraordinary skills and knowledge, or who volunteer for particularly challenging responsibilities.
- Launch a competitive grant program with funding for qualified districts (as determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) to pilot intensive, systemic induction and mentoring in the first three years of teacher service.
- Establish the Readiness Science and Math Teaching Fellowship Program to increase the Commonwealth's supply of qualified math and science teachers.
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will accelerate efforts to make available to teachers an online, formative assessment system that will provide "real-time" data on student performance as measured against state standards. This data-driven instruction system will help teachers to analyze current student performance and continuously modify teaching practice to meet evolving student learning needs.
- Maintain the current MCAS graduation requirement and strengthen the system by adding complementary measures of student growth and 21st century skills. This could include a culminating, multidisciplinary senior project on a student-selected topic of interest.

BY 2020:

- Massachusetts will have a robust educator development system.
- Educators, as well as students, will be expected to learn throughout their careers. Teachers will be devoted to the continuous advancement of their content knowledge and teaching skills.
- All Massachusetts teachers will enter schools with realistic expectations of the realities of the classroom, based on practical field experiences during their training.
- Teacher preparation programs will be equally strong in delivering 21st century content, instructional skills, and field experiences that provide preservice teachers with opportunities for observation, analysis and practice.
- Teaching will be recognized as a profession of stature.
- All Massachusetts public schools will be led by superintendents and principals who nurture all students and successfully apply instructional and managerial expertise to foster continuous schoolwide improvement.

SPOTLIGHT: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

Our commitment to continuous improvement in education requires a commensurate commitment to attracting and retaining the best possible teachers and education leaders at all levels of our education system and particularly in essential content areas.

The Readiness Science and Math Fellowship Program is an important opportunity annually to offer 60 math and science majors the opportunity to earn their master's degrees while teaching in school districts with significant numbers of low-income students. In addition, we will work with teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities to create a statewide teacher residency network. Similar to medical residency programs and modeled after the successful Boston Teacher Residency Program, the initiative will combine rigorous academic coursework with enriching field experiences. In addition, the commissioner and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should take immediate action to bring more teachers into classrooms by streamlining and strengthening state certification and licensure policies and procedures.

To help draw the best and brightest into teaching, we must address the compensation gap between positions in the private sector and teaching positions in high-demand disciplines. Through a new program of differentiated pay, we will initially focus on several priorities:

- Science and math educators;
- Educators with dual certification in a content area and special education;
- Educators with significant professional development credits teaching English language learners or special education students; and

- Educators who elect to teach in high-needs, low-income schools and districts.

Recruitment efforts must be complemented by efforts to reduce the unacceptably high attrition rates of beginning teachers. Comprehensive initial and ongoing support is essential. Through a competitive grant program for qualifying high-needs school districts, the Commonwealth will pilot a systemic induction and mentoring program for teachers in their first three years of teaching.

Further, we propose regional Readiness Centers — multi-purpose, collaborative hubs for content and professional development as well as school improvement. The centers will be governed by diverse boards of representatives from higher education, elementary and secondary schools, and early education. They will be staffed by both content and instructional experts charged with bringing the latest research to educators; facilitating the exchange of best practices between teachers and school leaders; and fostering local partnerships among students, schools, educators, businesses and community organizations. The Commonwealth Readiness Centers will be part of our state's new accountability and assistance system.

As part of the effort to keep outstanding educators in our schools and classrooms, we will establish a statewide career ladder that rewards educators who advance along a career path — for example, from novice to professional to coach. Finally, those schools that demonstrate consistent improvements in overall student achievement will be rewarded as we redouble our effort to foster a culture of collaboration and cooperation in education.



- Establish and support a statewide career ladder for educators pre-K through 12, creating a path of professional advancements with commensurate salary increases for educators who assume instructional mentoring and leadership positions within our schools and school districts.
- Reform the state teacher certification and licensure processes as well as other teacher development policies to eliminate bureaucratic barriers and help attract and facilitate state capacity to attract, prepare, develop and retain a high-quality, culturally diverse and inspiring teaching force for the students of the Commonwealth.

Mid term (2012–15)

- Close the compensation gap between faculty at Massachusetts’ higher education institutions and peer institutions in other states, particularly the New England states.
- Reward outstanding school performance by providing financial rewards for “whole school improvement,” defined as continuous advances in overall student achievement.
- Partner with the state’s teacher colleges to develop a statewide teacher residency program similar to medical residency programs that would combine rigorous coursework, practical training in diverse settings, and certification and licensure.
- Foster an intensive approach to ongoing teacher development and data-driven instruction, especially in schools with significant achievement gaps, through a pilot program that emphasizes dramatically improving early literacy achievement in kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Long term (2016–20 and beyond)

- Establish regional Readiness Centers dedicated to the continuous improvement of education at all levels of our public education system. These centers could be located at state colleges or universities but would be directed by boards comprised of regional pre-K through 12, higher education, business and community organization leaders.
- Update Massachusetts’ teacher preparation programs for 21st century teaching and learning by providing: 1) subject-matter knowledge that is aligned with the state’s academic standards; 2) instructional knowledge and skills tailored to the student body teachers will be serving; and 3) field experiences that engage pre-service teachers in observation, analysis and practice in varied school and district settings.

GOAL 3: COLLEGE, CAREER AND LIFE SUCCESS

Prepare every student for postsecondary education, career and lifelong economic, social and civic success

Administration Action Agenda

Short term (2008–11)

- Develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for integrating 21st century skills into all aspects of public education: standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development and learning environments. These reforms will be guided by the work of task forces of the Boards of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, and the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees.

BY 2020:

- Massachusetts will be educating its students to compete effectively for jobs with the world's top students.
 - The state assessment system will effectively measure each student's mastery of the skills and knowledge necessary to be a full and active participant in 21st century higher education, work and society.
 - The state's high school dropout rate will be reduced to less than 10 percent.
 - At least 90 percent of Massachusetts students will finish high school ready for college — including community college — without having to take any remedial courses.
 - The Massachusetts public education system will effectively serve a diverse student body and be responsive to the evolving workforce needs of the state's businesses and industries.
 - Personal or family financial constraints will not be a barrier to achieving an associate degree or the equivalent training in a professional trade.
- Beginning with the fiscal year 2010 budget, increase needs-based financial aid for higher education to low-income students and extend and pro-rate the same benefit to part-time students.
 - Create a pilot program to provide community college opportunities to: 1) existing and aspiring early education and care educators in exchange for several years of service in the Commonwealth's early education and care workforce; and 2) parents or guardians of income-eligible students in our pre-K through 12 system.
 - Provide opportunities for accelerated graduation and early entry into college for qualifying students who at age 16 or over pass an internationally benchmarked exam, such as the International Baccalaureate, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or Advanced Placement exams to bypass all other requirements, graduate from high school and enter college.



SPOTLIGHT: FULL ACCESS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Success in a 21st century global economy requires more than a high school diploma. That's why the Commonwealth is expanding its commitment to public education to include full access to community college for anyone who seeks it. Our long-term goal is to establish a public education system that guarantees access to free community college or the equivalent postsecondary or vocational education. To move us in that direction — and help us quickly achieve related objectives — we will focus first on existing and aspiring early education and care educators and the parents or guardians of income-eligible students in our pre-K through 12 system.

Creating a statewide system of early education and care that includes universal, high-quality prekindergarten is a pillar of our action agenda. To meet this goal, we must build the quality of our early education teaching force and encourage more talented teachers to enter this system. To encourage new entrants into the field and provide career pathways and higher education access to those already in the field, we will seek competitive proposals from collaborative teams. Teams might include a vocational high school with an early education track, a community college and a four-year institution of higher education. Priority will be given to applicants from areas with underperforming schools and districts and/or areas where children and families face multiple risks, such as poverty and inadequate health care.

These teams will craft agreements to facilitate rapid, easy access to higher education for early education providers

and potential providers. Teams will reduce bureaucratic barriers to education and training, while providing supports and mentoring to help aspiring early educators achieve their degrees. Teams will help students receive credit for prior equivalent courses and educational experiences.

Teams will provide each student the time needed to earn her or his degree as well as ongoing mentoring, career counseling and academic advising. In addition, they may provide ABE and ESOL courses as well as resources and supports to help staff currently in the field transition successfully into postsecondary institutions.

Qualifying students who benefit from these programs will be required to stay in the early education field in Massachusetts for a specified length of time after earning an associate degree. They will be expected to help pay for their educations within the limits of their abilities. And they will be expected to maintain a good academic standing to remain eligible for financial support.

Early education programs that actively partner to advance the education of their employees could be eligible for an increase in Universal Pre-K grant funds or other incentives. Employers will have to agree in advance to flexible scheduling and could be required to contribute to the cost of tuition in exchange for the student's commitment to stay employed in the program while attending college.

- Support legislation to allow children of undocumented immigrants to attend a public college or university in the Commonwealth at the in-state tuition rate if they have attended Massachusetts' schools, passed the MCAS, received a high school diploma and are on a path toward citizenship.
- Prioritize the state's commitment to and investment in a robust high school-to-college Web portal by supporting and advancing the existing partnership among the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education, and the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority. The Web portal will improve student, parent and counselor access to information and tools about postsecondary education opportunities.
- Develop and make available a state diagnostic College Readiness Assessment for all 11th graders to inform their course selection and senior-year activities. These assessments may be similar to those currently given to entering college freshmen.
- Provide students with maximum flexibility and mobility to earn a college degree by guaranteeing transfer of course credit between and among the state's public higher education institutions.

Mid term (2012–15)

- Annually increase the investment in and availability of dual enrollment opportunities for all students. We will focus initially on first-generation college-goers, students interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines, and concurrent enrollment programs for students with special needs.
- Build on the Connecting Activities work of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to place a Career Readiness Counselor first in every high-needs high school, and then in every high-needs middle school.

Long term (2016–20 and beyond)

- Increase high school graduation rates and college readiness, particularly among minority and low-income youth, by increasing the number of Early College High Schools in the Commonwealth. These high schools provide a unique and proven opportunity for traditionally underserved students to earn simultaneously a high school diploma and two years of college credit that can be applied toward an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.
- To capitalize on the critical role of community colleges in our education and workforce development system and to enhance the ability of Massachusetts' students and businesses to compete internationally, the public education system should include guaranteed access to free community college or the equivalent postsecondary or vocational education.



GOAL 4: INNOVATION AND SYSTEMIC REFORM TO CREATE A 21ST CENTURY PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the Commonwealth's schools, school districts, colleges and universities as well as in the partnerships and collaborations among education institutions, communities, businesses and nonprofits

Administration Action Agenda

Short term (2008–11)

- Establish a Readiness Finance Commission to recommend short-term education investments for the fiscal year 2010 budget, including further adjustments to the Chapter 70 foundation budget and modifications to alleviate the burden on property tax. In addition, this commission will: 1) recommend systemic cost savings and efficiencies; 2) project costs/cost savings for each Readiness Project Initiative and a 21st century system of education; 3) identify potential sources of additional revenue; and 4) outline options for a comprehensive overhaul of the state's education finance system.
- Launch a new high-autonomy, in-district school model — the Readiness School — to facilitate teacher ownership, innovation, choice and responsiveness to student and family needs.
- Charge each of the education sector boards with strengthening, clarifying and improving accountability and linking the functions of accountability and assistance.
- Continue investing in the state's Expanded Learning Time Program.

BY 2020:

- The Massachusetts education system will include district schools with high levels of autonomy and flexibility to educate all students for the 21st century.
- The school day and school year will be structured to match the demands on students, teachers and families.
- Any student of any age who is interested in pursuing postsecondary education will have access to an affordable opportunity to do so.
- Massachusetts will have a higher education system distinguished by unprecedented cooperation and collaboration among the state's public and private institutions, attracting top students and faculty from around the world.
- Massachusetts' 21st century education system will be equitably, adequately and reliably financed for the long term.

SPOTLIGHT: READINESS SCHOOLS

Readiness Schools promise a new kind of teaching and learning experience — one built on the fundamental characteristics of all successful schools: strong leadership, educator ownership, innovation and high expectations for student achievement. It is time to extend those core principles of high-performing schools — and the benefits they enable — to dramatically more students in the Commonwealth.

Readiness Schools will challenge our mainstream schools and district leaders to embrace the flexibility and independence typically found in the charter sector. These would be high-autonomy public schools in which students, faculty, parents and the community share responsibility and ownership for results. Readiness Schools would:

- Be contract schools, launched or managed by a team authorized by and accountable to the local school committee. School committees would award contracts under procedures set by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Operate under performance contracts that hold them accountable for improving student learning.
- Be funded by the school district, using a weighted student formula, with more funds allocated for students who are more expensive to educate.
- Typically be staffed by union members who bargain collectively only for wages, benefits and due process dismissal procedures.

Importantly, Readiness Schools would have increased autonomy in five areas: staffing, budget, curriculum and

assessment, governance and policies, and school schedule and calendar. The leadership of each Readiness School would establish the operating standards in each of these five areas, with significant input from faculty and staff.

School committees could convert existing schools to Readiness status or develop new schools. Readiness Schools could be proposed by a team of teachers, a principal, a superintendent, unions, qualified educational management organizations, a group of parents, community-based organizations or qualified charter school operators. For example, a group of teachers could, in effect, create their own “educational private practice,” assuming management and operational responsibility for their own school under terms authorized by the local school committee.

Readiness Schools also could be proposed by the superintendent, subject to a faculty vote. Alternatively, in extreme instances of chronic local underperformance, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education might require the school committee to create a Readiness School by selecting a preferred provider that has demonstrated success with similar children. Districts opposed to such decisions could appeal to the state board.

By 2013, we hope to have at least 40 Readiness Schools throughout the state. Over time, we believe Readiness Schools will not only be high-performance centers of excellence, but also working examples of a new approach to education governance. Local school committees would act as contracting bodies with responsibility for and oversight of diverse providers of education services.



- Ensure access to high-quality after-school and out-of-school time programming in every high-needs community by streamlining responsibility, funding, authority and accountability of all state after-school and out-of-school-time programs.
- Allow tuition retention for both state-supported and continuing education courses.
- Establish the Commonwealth Education Innovation Fund, a public-private fundraising partnership to strengthen our collective capacity to meet pressing, statewide education challenges. Building on a modest annual investment, the state will seek additional funds from the business and nonprofit communities, as well as individual donors and philanthropists. Based on recommendations from the Executive Office of Education — developed in consultation with the Boards and Commissioners of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education, and the president and Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts — the Fund will establish a discrete list of evolving funding priorities to foster innovation in policy, practice, research, professional development and other capacity-building measures.
- Leverage information technology to expand student access to courses, content and credit by establishing Mass Online University and Mass Virtual High School.
- Close the home-family technology gap by establishing a state framework for low-cost, district-driven, home-computer lease programs.
- Provide incentives for regional information technology partnerships to improve teaching and learning, education administration and management, or the delivery of education services and support.

Mid term (2012–15)

- Fully fund the Department of Higher Education funding formula.
- Provide incentives for regional pre-K through higher education purchasing and service delivery partnerships beginning with legislation to provide full funding for districts that participate in regional partnerships for transportation of special education students.
- Better align the public education system to real-world needs by analyzing and communicating the academic, skill and training needs of emerging and high-growth business and industry sectors by providing public schools and higher education institutions with easy access to labor market analysis and information that will inform programming and planning decisions.

- Introduce legislation to allow state and municipal agencies to lease available space in state-owned facilities at below-market rates to qualified early education and care program providers.
- Introduce legislation to provide incentives to businesses that provide space at below-market rates for high-quality early education and care programs, or that give community residents access to the company's early education and care programs.
- Market licensable intellectual property generated at state-supported colleges, universities, research and other institutions to businesses located in and out of the state.

Long term (2016–20 and beyond)

- Launch a Statewide Master Teacher Contract Initiative that would start a critical conversation about transforming the educator compensation and benefit structure to attract top talent into teaching by, for example, offering flexibility for teachers to receive different pay and benefit packages at different stages of their careers. In this kind of scenario, new teachers might have the option of choosing higher compensation in lieu of longer-term benefits. Such a contract might also provide for more equitable distribution of teachers throughout the state while creating the possibility of various cost savings. For example, the Master Teacher Contract would provide a vehicle for addressing escalating health care costs, disparities in pay across regions of the state, pension portability and other issues. Such a contract would achieve the efficiency of eliminating contract negotiations in more than 300 separate school districts.
- Increase the size while reducing the number of the Commonwealth's current school districts to streamline administration and management structures, which will expand opportunities to ensure strong oversight and leadership and improve teaching and learning.
- Develop a statewide Research and Development Co-facilities Plan.
- Work with the Massachusetts' federal congressional delegation to explore options for advocating for the reallocation of federal Title I and special education funds for early education and care programs.



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APPENDIX: THE READINESS PROJECT REPORT

About the Readiness Project

Nine months ago, Governor Patrick called on a diverse group of education, business and civic leaders to look to the future of public education in the Commonwealth and offer a set of recommendations to transform our state system of public education into a comprehensive, integrated, student-centered education system that begins before kindergarten and continues through grade 12 and beyond.

The Governor's specific charge to the Readiness Project was to focus not on those changes that will bring incremental improvement but rather on dramatic, widespread improvements.

Governor Patrick named three individuals to lead an 18-member Readiness Project Leadership Council: Jackie Jenkins-Scott, president of Wheelock College; Thomas Payzant, former superintendent of the Boston Public Schools; and Joe Tucci, president, chairman and chief executive officer of EMC Corporation. Additionally, the Project formed 13 subcommittees to lean on and leverage the expertise of more than 200 Massachusetts citizens.

The work of the Readiness Project was informed by the research, debate and discussions of the subcommittees as well as by the perspectives of citizens across Massachusetts. Parents, teachers, students, professors, administrators, practitioners, experts, advocates and other community members shared their ideas at more than a dozen public forums, in town hall meetings with the Governor, and during countless smaller gatherings and conversations.

All of this work has resulted in a clear vision and set of recommendations with the success of every student — no matter her ZIP code, age or socioeconomic status — at the center. These recommendations provide a platform for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be not only a *national* education leader, but also a 21st century *world* education leader.

The Readiness Project goals and recommendations follow. These documents represent a portion of the Project's work. The 13 subcommittee reports are available online, as are additional details related to our recommendations and ideas for implementation. Please visit www.mass.gov/governor/education.

AT A GLANCE

- 10-year horizon
- Three co-chairs
- 18-member Leadership Council
- 13 subcommittees with a collective membership of more than 200
- More than a dozen public meetings in 14 cities and towns, drawing more than 2,000 people into the conversation
- More than 700 grassroots leaders (Readiness Reps)
- Four final goals
- 24 final recommendations

Dear Governor Patrick:

At the onset of the Readiness Project, you challenged us and the people of Massachusetts to set aside the constraints of the day to think creatively about the future of public education. We took your challenge seriously. On behalf of the members of the Readiness Project Leadership Council and the more than 200 people who volunteered their time and expertise by serving on Readiness Project subcommittees, we are pleased to offer the following findings and recommendations.

Through our own work and professional experience, we know just how much opportunity emerges by looking to the future to define a clear, strategic vision to drive decisions and inform actions. We commend you for leading the Commonwealth toward a comprehensive, integrated and student-centered public education system. We must build on successes gained through the most recent era of statewide education reform to propel the Commonwealth into the 21st century. To generate the dramatic and widespread improvement in education necessary, we must work to transform our system of public education to:

- Meet the learning needs of each student and provide the understanding, encouragement, support, knowledge and skills each requires to exceed the state's high expectations and rigorous academic standards;
- Ensure that every student in the Commonwealth is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported and effective educators;
- Prepare every student for postsecondary education, career and lifelong economic, social and civic success; and
- Unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the Commonwealth's schools, school districts, colleges and universities as well as in the partnerships and collaborations among education institutions, communities, businesses and nonprofits.

We know that such a transformation is complex and challenging. We also believe that if we fail, we will limit the prospects for the lifelong success of individuals, the vitality of communities and the economic strength of our state. We stand ready to continue working with you, your administration and all those in the Commonwealth who believe as we do that a strong public education system is the gateway to opportunity.

Respectfully,

Jackie Jenkins-Scott
Chair

Thomas Payzant
Chair

Joe Tucci
Chair



Readiness Project Goals and Recommendations

Readiness Goal 1

To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must meet the learning needs of each student and provide the understanding, encouragement, support, knowledge and skills each requires to exceed the state's high expectations and rigorous academic standards.

Recommendations

- Establish a fully integrated and adequately funded state system of early education and care that begins at birth.
- Engage and mobilize families and all sectors of society to provide the education, social, emotional, health and human services each student needs to be ready to learn and succeed in school.
- Increase adult learning opportunities to help families engage in their children's education.

Readiness Goal 2

To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must ensure that every student is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported and effective educators.

Recommendations

- Provide intensive, systemic induction and mentoring for all educators in their first three years of service.
- Accelerate the entry of highly qualified teachers into public schools, particularly in high-needs districts and high-priority disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and math.
- Improve teaching in science, technology, engineering and math disciplines by strengthening content knowledge and teaching strategies.

- Maintain the current MCAS test as a graduation requirement and strengthen the system to include measures of individual student growth and college readiness, which would complement but not replace the current measures.
- Recruit and retain world-class faculty to the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions.
- Create regional partnerships, resources and capacity to improve education at every level.

Readiness Goal 3

To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must prepare every student for postsecondary education, career and lifelong economic, social and civic success.

Recommendations

- Align the Commonwealth's standards, frameworks and curriculum with the demands of 21st century life, work and citizenship.
- Engage students in their learning by broadly integrating 21st century tools into teaching and learning as well as increasing interdisciplinary, hands-on and project-based learning.
- Provide students with multiple pathways to postsecondary education and the workforce that are based on high, internationally benchmarked academic and employment standards.
- Make college accessible and affordable for all Commonwealth students.
- Provide two years of postsecondary education or the equivalent in a professional trade as the new baseline of our state education system.
- Guarantee transfer of credits between and among the state's public higher education institutions.
- Increase the state's production of postsecondary degrees.



Readiness Goal 4

To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the Commonwealth's schools, school districts, colleges and universities as well as in the partnerships and collaborations among education institutions, communities, businesses and nonprofits.

Recommendations

- Structure the school day and school year to match the needs of students, teachers and families.
- Bring the proven benefits of the charter school movement into mainstream schools and classrooms throughout the Commonwealth.
- Provide sufficient resources to support the development of a truly 21st century public education system.
- Create a statewide master teacher contract.
- Actively partner with all segments of society to efficiently and effectively fund innovations and systemic improvements in education.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of education governance and services to students by dramatically reducing the number of school districts in the Commonwealth.
- Leverage information technology to support innovations in teaching and learning.
- Strengthen the connections among the Commonwealth's education and economic development strategies and initiatives.

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